DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 278 261 FL 016 400

AUTHOR	McFerren, Margaret; Robson, Barbara
TITLE	Criteria for the Evaluation of Secondary and Post-Secondary Foreign Language Teaching Materials.
INSTITUTION	California Univ., Los Angeles. Center for Language Education and Research.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	ER4
PUB DATE	86
CONTRACT	400-85-1010
NOTE	32p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Bilingual Instructional Materials; Computer Assisted Instruction; Difficulty Level; *Evaluation Criteria; *Instructional Material Evaluation; *Media Selection; Postsecondary Education; Records (Forms); Reference Materials; Secondary Education; *Second Language Instruction; *Uncommonly Taught Languages

ABSTRACT

Criteria for the evaluation of foreign language materials in the commonly and less commonly taught languages in secondary and postsecondary institutions are presented. They are intended for use by individual teachers or appointed committees when selecting and evaluating language teaching materials. The criteria contain a set of evaluative and descriptive questions in six material areas: novice, intermediate, and advanced level course materials, reference materials, dictionaries, and computer-assisted instructional materials. In developing the criteria, attempts have been made to ensure ease of use while also capturing sufficient detail to provide a useful evaluation of the materials. A complete evaluation consists of three forms to be completed by the materials evaluator: a form eliciting descriptive information about the materials (bibliographic citation, availability, language/dialect presented, form of presentation, grammatical/pedagogical approach, overall organization of the text, vocabulary areas covered, etc.); a form presenting meta- criteria (broad questions that should be asked about any language materials, regardless of purpose); and one of six forms presenting questions tailored to the specific use of materials (proficiency level, intended use of materials, etc.). Sample forms are appended. (Author/MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

EDUCATIONAL REPORT SERIES

ED278261

CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING MATERIALS

Margaret McFerren
Barbara Robson

Center for Applied Linguistics

CLEAR

CENTER FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

CJR Tucker

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

University of California, Los Angeles

FL 016 400

CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING MATERIALS

Margaret McFerren
Barbara Robson

Center for Applied Linguistics

ER4

Center for Language Education and Research
University of California, Los Angeles

1986

FL016402

Center for Language Education and Research

The Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) to carry out a set of research and professional development activities relevant to the education of limited English proficient students and foreign language students. Located at the University of California, Los Angeles, CLEAR also has branches at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C., Yale University, Harvard University, and the University of California, Santa Barbara.

CLEAR believes that working toward a language-competent society should be among our nation's highest educational priorities. Thus, CLEAR is committed to assisting both non-native and native speakers of English to develop a high degree of academic proficiency in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing in English and a second or native language. To work toward this goal, CLEAR has united researchers from education, linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and sociology with practitioners, parents, and community agencies.

A coordinated set of research, instructional improvement, community involvement, and dissemination activities are oriented around three major themes: (a) improving the English proficiency and academic content knowledge of language minority students; (b) strengthening second language capacities through improved teaching and learning of foreign languages; and (c) improving research and practice in educational programs that jointly meet the needs of language minority and majority students.

The CLEAR Educational Report Series is designed for practitioners and laypersons interested in issues in second language education and foreign language teaching and research.

OERI Contract #400-85-1010

For further information contact:

Amado M. Padilla, Director
Center for Language Education and Research
1100 Glendon Avenue, Suite #1740
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Criteria for The Evaluation of Secondary and Post-Secondary Foreign Language Teaching Materials

ABSTRACT

This technical report presents criteria for the evaluation of foreign language teaching materials in the commonly- and less-commonly-taught languages in secondary and post-secondary institutions. They are intended for use by individual teachers or appointed committees when selecting and evaluating language teaching materials. The criteria contain a set of evaluative and descriptive questions in six materials areas: novice-, intermediate-, and advanced-level course materials; reference materials; dictionaries; and computer-assisted instructional materials. In developing the criteria, attempts have been made to ensure ease of use while also capturing sufficient detail to provide a useful evaluation of the materials. A complete evaluation consists of three forms to be completed by the materials evaluator: a form which elicits descriptive information about the materials (bibliographic citation, availability, language/dialect presented, form of presentation, grammatical/pedagogical approach, overall organization of the text, vocabulary areas covered, and so on); a form presenting meta-criteria (broad questions which should be asked about any language materials, regardless of purpose); and one of six forms presenting questions tailored to the specific use of the materials (proficiency level, intended use of materials, etc.)

Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR)
Criteria Development
October, 1986

Development of Criteria for The Evaluation of Secondary- and Post-Secondary-Level Foreign Language Teaching Materials

I. Introduction

The language materials evaluation criteria presented in this report are a revision of criteria which were originally developed at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) as part of a project CAL performed for the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) to assess the state of materials development in forty-one uncommonly-taught languages. This revision, undertaken by the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR), is intended to provide criteria for the evaluation of foreign language teaching materials in the commonly- and less-commonly-taught languages, at the secondary and post-secondary levels of instruction. It is expected that these criteria will be disseminated for use by individual teachers or appointed text evaluation committees in secondary schools and universities.

II. How the Original Criteria Were Developed for The ILR

Criteria development was completed in a two-stage process. The first stage involved a two-day conference held at CAL March 28 - 29, 1985. At that conference, representatives of U.S. government agencies involved in language teaching, representatives of uncommonly-taught language programs in universities around the U.S., and staff members at the Center for Applied Linguistics worked out a set of preliminary criteria by which existing materials in the uncommonly-taught languages can be evaluated.

The individuals involved in the developmental process of the criteria agreed on two general principles. The first of these is that there are basic evaluative questions which apply to any text, regardless of purpose, and that such evalua-

tive questions should be used as the basis for rejecting a text straight off. This principle evolved into the "meta-criteria".

The second general principle is that there are a tremendous number of descriptive criteria which might form the basis for text selection, and that the value of such criteria would vary according to teacher preference and program style. Yet, there was the concern that unless these descriptive criteria were tied to some proficiency standard, they would be no more useful in general than publisher text descriptions. It was decided that each context-based set of descriptive criteria should include an initial question of numerous parts which asks questions about a text in relation to how that text contributes to student processes in reaching certain pre-determined proficiency levels. The agreed-upon standard was the ILR Proficiency Guidelines.

The result of the conference was a set of evaluative and descriptive questions in six materials areas: basic courses, advanced courses, reference materials, dictionaries, electronic materials, and refresher/maintenance materials.

The second stage of criteria development involved application of the evaluative and descriptive questions to select materials. During this materials evaluation stage, several questions of scope and format raised at the conference were resolved.

Finally, thirty-two outside evaluators applied the criteria to the evaluation of texts in forty-one uncommonly-taught languages. Because of the extensive work done at CAL on the development of this set of criteria, and their proven success in evaluating uncommonly-taught language teaching materials, they have been revised as an instrument for wider applicability and distribution.

III. Revisions of the original criteria

In order to provide a flexible and widely applicable set of criteria for the evaluation of foreign language teaching materials, the above-detailed criteria were broadened in three important areas: (1) to make them suitable for the evaluation of teaching materials at both the secondary- and post-secondary levels of instruction; (2) to make them suitable for the evaluation of the commonly- and less commonly-taught languages; and (3) to provide for the use of the ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines as the standard for the descriptive criteria (for the purposes of these criteria, a far more suitable set of guidelines than the ILR Proficiency Guidelines designed for government use).*

Use of the ACTFL proficiency guidelines required extensive reworking of the original criteria, plus the preparation of a set of descriptive criteria to evaluate materials designed to bring the student to the ACTFL-defined intermediate-high level. Additionally, the category in the original criteria for refresher-maintenance materials has been deleted.

There were several sources of comments that contributed to the revision of the original criteria. First, thirty-two university-level teachers of uncommonly-taught languages had used them during the earlier project and had made suggestions for their improvement. Several other language and materials professionals were consulted as well for comments and further recommendations, and a revised draft of the criteria was prepared for external review by language coordinators and teachers at the secondary level of instruction. These individuals were asked to comment on the overall usefulness of the criteria and to

---

* For a copy of the ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines, write to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 579 Broadway, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706.

offer suggestions for improvement, and in some cases, to apply the criteria to actual texts in use in their schools. Finally, the criteria were sent for comments to one member of the ACTFL committee appointed to prepare the proficency guidelines.

In general, external response to the criteria has been positive. All suggestions for change, expansion and improvement have been included, or discussed with the reviewers and mentioned in the narrative which follows.

IV. Format of The Criteria

The format of the criteria reflect the concerns that they be easy for evaluators to use (minimizing the amount of typing or handwriting); that they provide a clear picture of the particular materials to those who read the evaluations without a copy of the materials at hand; that they be codified as much as possible without sacrificing important information; and that the format be self-explanatory (minimizing the necessity for explanatory notes, etc.).

There are three possible answers to each question on the evaluation forms: yes, somewhat and no. This system was devised to avoid the use of a numerical scale of answers (0 to 5, for example), which might have been used on a cumulative basis. As mentioned above, it was important that the descriptive criteria be made flexible enough to apply to a wide variety of program goals and styles. Materials evaluators must have a teaching context in mind before they can make meaningful judgments about potential materials. A particular question or criterion, therefore, will have a positive value in one context, a negative value in another, and in a third context be purely descriptive. The somewhat category was added to cover the situations when a straight yes or no answer was misleading.

Additionally, because there are important idiosyncrasies about the texts that the questions may fail to capture, and to provide the opportunity to explain

somewhat answers when desirable, each set of criteria contains space for narrative comment. In the three sets of criteria for novice-, intermediate- and advanced-level course materials, additional space has been added for comment on the availability and quality of supplementary materials.

V. Discussion of Criteria

A. Layout

For any one set of materials, an evaluation consists of three forms to be completed by the materials evaluator(s):

1. a form which elicits descriptive information about the materials: bibliographic citation, availability, language/dialect presented, form of presentation (original script, transcription, transliteration), physical quality of book, grammatical/pedagogical approach, overall organization of text, vocabulary areas covered, and so on;
2. a form presenting meta-criteria--broad questions which should be asked about any materials, regardless of specific purpose;
3. one of six forms presenting questions tailored to the specific use of the materials: novice-, intermediate-, and advanced-level teaching materials; reference materials, dictionaries, and computer-assisted instructional materials.

B. Definitions

The following definitions have been adopted for the purposes of this report and for use of the criteria:

commonly-taught languages: Those languages with the highest enrollments according to the latest MLA statistics: Spanish, French and German.

less-commonly-taught languages: Hebrew, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic.

uncommonly-taught languages: all languages not listed above.

[The above designations have been chosen on the basis of Modern Language Association enrollment figures in foreign language programs at the secondary and university levels of instruction. While the revised criteria are no longer to be used with languages in the uncommonly-taught category in general, they would be applicable to uncommonly-taught languages with highly standardized systems, such as Italian, Portuguese, Finnish, Swedish, Danish, or Dutch.]

material(s): a discrete unit of printed or recorded language with its accompanying documentation, instructions for teaching, and applications exercises. (A single unit may be referred to as a text, workbook, dictionary, and so on. Larger units or groups thereof will be referred to as materials.)

course: the full spectrum or subset thereof of texts, supplements, teacher involvement, ambience and class interaction involved in implementing the curriculum goals.

lesson: a unit of instruction in a particular set of materials.

function: use of language in a particular social context, e.g. greeting people, telling time, etc.

novice-level materials: those designed to contribute to student progress from 0 proficiency to the ACTFL-designated novice-high level.

intermediate-level materials: those designed to contribute to student progress to the ACTFL-designated intermediate-high level of proficiency.

advanced-level materials: those designed to contribute to student progress to the ACTFL-designated advanced-plus level of proficiency.

reference materials: 1) materials about a language but not designed to

teach; 2) older teaching materials which are no longer appropriate for teaching, but usable as references; and 3) materials designed to supplement basal course materials, but which cut across proficiency levels in their usefulness.

authentic language samples: written or recorded samples of language which have originated for reasons other than language teaching; e.g., a newspaper article, literature, a recording of a political speech, television/radio programs, films, etc.

contrived text or example: a sample of language designed for language teaching, e.g. some passages in "simplified" readers, examples in dictionaries, etc.

transliteration: a system whereby the symbols in a non-roman alphabet are represented, one for one, by symbols in the roman alphabet.

transcription: a system whereby the pronunciation of a language is represented directly by phonetic (or phonemic) symbols and which may or may not differ from the normal orthography of the language.

hardware: all of the physical parts that make up a computer and any other components in its system.

program: an individual set of instructions that tells the hardware what to do.

VI. Discussion of Particular Criteria

A word of caution with regard to the use of these criteria is necessary, especially for prospective users at the secondary level. In order for these criteria to be of maximum usefulness, the evaluator must always pay strict attention to the proficiency level descriptions, and less to the designated names of the criteria: novice, intermediate and advanced. What is labeled an "intermediate" course at the secondary level may in fact be a course whose goal is to bring the student to what is actually a novice-high proficiency level. Texts for use in such a course, then, must be evaluated using the criteria for novice-level materials. Likewise for "advanced" courses which take the student

to the intermediate-high proficiency level, and which must be evaluated using the intermediate criteria.

A. Meta-criteria

The meta-criteria were designed to fulfill the need for evaluative, as distinct from descriptive, criteria. They are basic questions which transcend individual preferences and program goals and apply in an evaluative sense to all materials, regardless of purpose. Is the language represented what it was intended to be? Are the materials culturally accurate, linguistically accurate, up to date, clearly organized and lucidly presented? Are the materials usable in language teaching contexts? These questions constitute the meta-criteria. If the answer to any of them is "no", the materials should not be considered for use. If the answer to the final question on the meta-criteria form (as to usability in language teaching contexts) is "yes", the evaluator would put a check below in the appropriate box and go on to the completion of that form.

B. Descriptive Criteria

The designated title for each category of materials (Novice, Intermediate and Advanced) has been taken directly from the ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines to avoid any confusion on the part of prospective users of these criteria.

The first question in each set of descriptive criteria has been designed to elicit information regarding a particular set of materials in terms of the areas in which it can contribute to student progress to the designated proficiency level. Where appropriate, the ACTFL descriptors for particular proficiency levels have been included as they appear in the ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines. Likewise, the ordering of the skills areas in this question is the same as the order followed in the ACTFL Guidelines.

Prospective users are reminded that no attempt has been made in any of the sets of descriptive criteria to arrange questions according to ascribed value or weight. The importance of one question over another is a matter of teacher preference and program style.

Novice-Level Course Materials Evaluation

Outside evaluators of the criteria were concerned that information be specifically elicited on the presence of sex bias and stereotype in the materials. Other concerns include the presence of authentic language samples, exercises and examples coordinated to core content, the provision of opportunities to engage in a variety of communicative tasks, etc.

A separate evaluation form for supplementary materials to particular texts or series of texts has not been developed; thus, there is ample space on the current evaluation form for the listing of available supplements, and for extra commentary on the quality and overall usefulness of such materials. It should be kept in mind, however, that our broad definition of course materials includes supplementary items, and thus the criteria are to be considered questions applicable not only to a text, but to the tapes, workbooks, audiovisuals, etc. which accompany it.

Intermediate-Level Materials Evaluation. Outside evaluators expressed the concern that most of the information elicited for novice-level material needs to be repeated at the intermediate-level. Thus, the criteria for evaluation of texts at this level are almost identical to those for the novice-level, except in the first question. The areas in which the materials contribute to student progress to intermediate-high have been reworded to reflect the proficiency level itself.

Advanced-Level Materials Evaluation. Materials in this category are considered according to their propensity to bring the student to the proficiency level advanced-plus, even though the ACTFL guidelines designate two higher levels--superior and distinguished. The cut-off was made at advanced-plus, as it was agreed by several outside evaluators that the two higher levels are generally not attained through classroom instruction, but rather through a life spent living among and working with native speakers of the language.

Computer-Assisted Instructional Materials. The Center for Applied Linguistics, through its ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, has recently published a fact-sheet listing important questions to ask about computer-assisted language learning software.* The earlier criteria category for such materials, which was labeled "electronic materials," has been revised to be consistent with this ERIC document, which includes very useful categories such as pedagogical and technical style, teacher considerations and hardware considerations.

VII. A General Word about Categorization of Materials

Materials should not be difficult to categorize for evaluation using these criteria. In general, keeping in mind that the criteria are proficiency-based (as mentioned above) should eliminate any confusion. Supplementary materials should always be evaluated according to the proficiency level which they help the student attain. Most supplementary materials will be tied to or suggested for use with a particular course textbook series, and will, therefore, be quite easy to place. The odd supplementary materials such as a phrasebook of survival

* This fact sheet is available from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd St., NW, Washington, DC, 20037.

vocabulary or a simple vocabulary list, for example, would be evaluated as novice-level teaching materials. On the other hand, a supplementary item which cuts across proficiency levels (such as a verb paradigm book) would be evaluated as reference material.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE TEXT

LANGUAGE _____ DATE: _____

Full Bibliographical Information:

Specific language/dialect taught:

Language teaching context:

Publication information: (availability, price, etc.)

Intended users:

Overall grammatical/pedagogical approach:

Presentation of language (original script, transcription, transliteration):

Physical quality of book:

Appropriateness of target language:

Appropriateness of English:

Overall organization of text:

Vocabulary areas covered:

General comments:

Evaluator:

Center for Language Education and Research
Materials Evaluation - (Evaluative)
Meta-Criteria

(Author, text names here)

_____

_____

_____

META - CRITERIA

	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	COMMENTS
Is the language presented in the materials acceptable as representative of the text's intended language dialect as it is currently spoken and written?				
Are the materials suitable in terms of: a. accuracy of cultural information? b. linguistic accuracy? c. methodological consistency? d. up-to-dateness of material? e. fulfillment of text goals? f. clarity of organization? g. lucidity of presentation?				
Are the materials usable in language teaching contexts? (Check below if yes)				

* Specific language-teaching context

Novice-Level Courses	
Intermediate-Level Courses	
Advanced-Level Courses	
Reference Materials	
Dictionaries	
Computer-Assisted Materials	

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Evaluator: Date:

Y = yes: S = somewhat: N = no

Center for Language Education and Research
Individual Text Evaluation - (Descriptive)
Novice-Level Course Material - 1

Materials User:
Teacher ☐
Student ☐

NOVICE-LEVEL COURSE MATERIALS EVALUATION

Processes in which the materials contribute to student progress up to proficiency level NOVICE HIGH:	Speaking			Reading			Listening			Writing		
	Y	S	N	Y	S	N	Y	S	N	Y	S	N
Presentation, explanation of basic grammatical structures	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Development of a range of vocabulary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Development of pronunciation skills	☐	☐	☐									
Development of structured communicative skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Development of free communicative skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Development of encoding, decoding skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Development of ability to read in areas of practical need				☐	☐	☐						
Development of ability to comprehend sentence-length utterances of high frequency							☐	☐	☐			
Development of ability to comprehend sentence-length utterances on the basis of context							☐	☐	☐			
Development of ability to write simple, fixed expressions										☐	☐	☐

	Y	S	N
Are the materials free of stereotype and sex bias?	☐	☐	☐
Is the amount of material to be covered appropriate to classtime available?	☐	☐	☐
Do the materials consist of authentic spoken and/or written language samples?	☐	☐	☐
Do the materials require that students use the language in authentic tasks?	☐	☐	☐
Are all portions of the text appropriately coordinated to core content?	☐	☐	☐

Y = Yes; S = somewhat; N = no

Center for Language Education and Research
Individual Text Evaluation - (Descriptive)
Novice-Level Course Material - 2

	Y	S	N
Do the materials present sociolinguistic information (e.g., gestures, taboos) necessary for appropriate linguistic behavior?			
Do the materials include a wide range of learning activities for the student?			
Does implementation of the materials provide students with opportunities to hear and imitate, and use the language in a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks?			
Do the materials include sequencing from structured to free communicative?			
Does implementation of the materials provide teachers with opportunities (such as exercises and/or tests) to evaluate student proficiency in the four skills areas?			
Are the materials to be learned broken down into appropriate segments which students can handle without undue fatigue or strain on their attention span?			
Are previously-learned items of structure, vocabulary and function overtly recycled in later units or lessons?			
Do the materials help the teacher control the use of English in class?			
Are the materials likely to be visually appealing without distracting student attention from important topics or exercises?			
Do the materials expose students to language material above their current level?			
Do the materials enable the student to develop coping skills to handle language material above their present level?			
In presenting the language, are the materials appropriate to the age level and interests of the intended audience?			
Do the materials include teacher's guides?			
If homework assignments are included, are they practical and intended as classroom reinforcement/preparation?			
Are the materials considered successful by current users, if any?			

Y = yes; S = somewhat; N = no

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Supplementary Materials:

What supplementary materials are readily available to accompany the text?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do supplementary materials creatively reflect and reinforce text goals without being repetitious and uninteresting?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Evaluator: Date:

Center for Language Education and Research
Individual Text Evaluation - (Descriptive)
Intermediate-Level Course Material - 1

Materials User:
Teacher ☐
Student ☐

INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL COURSE MATERIALS EVALUATION

Processes in which the materials contribute to student progress up to proficiency level INTERMEDIATE HIGH:	Speaking			Reading			Listening			Writing		
	Y	S	N	Y	S	N	Y	S	N	Y	S	N
Presentation and explanation of intermediate grammatical structures	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ability to initiate, sustain and close a general conversation with strategies appropriate to a range of circumstances and topics	☐	☐	☐				☐	☐	☐			
Ability to read with full understanding simple connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs of interest to the reader or of which the reader has knowledge				☐	☐	☐						
Ability to extract main ideas and some information from texts at next higher level (advanced-low) featuring description and narration				☐	☐	☐						
Ability to sustain comprehension over stretches of connected discourse on a number of topics beyond immediate needs and pertaining to different times and places							☐	☐	☐			
Ability to meet practical writing needs, such as notetaking on familiar topics, or written responses to personal questions										☐	☐	☐

	Y	S	N
Are the materials free of stereotype and sex bias?	☐	☐	☐
Is the amount of material to be covered appropriate to available classtime?	☐	☐	☐
Do the materials consist of authentic spoken and/or written language samples?	☐	☐	☐
Do the materials require that the student use the language in authentic tasks?	☐	☐	☐
Are all portions of the text appropriately coordinated to core content?	☐	☐	☐

Y = yes; S = somewhat; N = no

Center for Language Education and Research
Individual Text Evaluation - (Descriptive)
Intermediate-Level Course Material - 2

	Y	S	N
Do the materials present sociolinguistic information (e.g., gestures, taboos) necessary for appropriate linguistic behavior?			
Do the materials include a wide range of learning activities for the student?			
Does implementation of the materials provide students with opportunities to hear and imiate, and use the language in a variety of uncomplicated communicative activities?			
Does implementation of the materials provide teachers with opportunities (such as exercises and/or tests) to evaluate student proficiency in the four skills areas?			
Are the materials to be learned broken down into appropriate segments which students can handle without undue fatigue or strain on their attention span?			
Are previously-learned items of structure, vocabulary and function overtly recycled in later units or lessons?			
Do the materials help the teacher control the use of English in class?			
Are the materials likely to be visually appealing without distracting student attention from important topics or exercises?			
Do the materials expose students to language material above their present level?			
Do the materials enable the student to develop coping skills to handle language material above their current level?			
In presenting the language, are the materials appropriate to the age level and interests of the target audience?			
Do the materials include separate teacher's guides?			
If homework assignments are included, are they practical and intended as classroom reinforcement/preparation?			
Are the materials considered successful by current users, if any?			

Y = yes; S = somewhat; N = no

Center for Language Education and Research
Individual Text Evaluation - (Descriptive)
Intermediate-Level Course Material - 3

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Supplementary Materials:

What supplementary materials are readily available to accompany the text?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do supplementary materials creatively reflect and reinforce text goals without being repetitious and uninteresting?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Evaluator: Date:

Center for Language Education and Research
Individual Text Evaluation - (Descriptive)
Advanced-Level Course Material - 1

Materials User:
Teacher
Student

ADVANCED-LEVEL COURSE MATERIALS EVALUATION

Processes in which the materials contribute to student progress up to proficiency level ADVANCED PLUS:

	Speaking			Reading			Listening			Writing		
	Y	S	N	Y	S	N	Y	S	N	Y	S	N
Ability to use the language in a variety of contexts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Presentation, explanation of advanced grammatical structures	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ability to discuss concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence	☐	☐	☐				☐	☐	☐			
Ability to understand the main ideas of most speech in a standard dialect							☐	☐	☐			
Ability to read and understand parts of texts which are conceptually abstract and linguistically complex, and/or texts which treat unfamiliar topics, and/or involve aspects of target language culture				☐	☐	☐						
Ability to write with significant precision and in detail on a variety of topics; e.g., social and informal business correspondence, personal experiences, and the concrete aspects of topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence										☐	☐	☐

	Y	S	N
Do the materials consist of authentic texts?	☐	☐	☐
If so, are the materials annotated?	☐	☐	☐
Do the materials present a range of written genre?	☐	☐	☐
Do the materials present communicative opportunities?	☐	☐	☐
Do the materials present writing activities?	☐	☐	☐
Are the materials sequenced according to text goals?	☐	☐	☐

Y = yes; S = somewhat; N = no

Center for Language Education and Research
Individual Text Evaluation - (Descriptive)
Advanced-Level Course Material - 2

	Y	S	N
Are the materials chronologically sequenced?	☐	☐	☐
Is the historical period presented or talked about in the materials likely to be of interest to students?	☐	☐	☐
Are the materials adaptable to differing student backgrounds and interests?	☐	☐	☐
Are teaching suggestions or strategies to exploit the text included?	☐	☐	☐

What supplementary materials, if any, are readily available to accompany the text?

Supplementary Materials: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Evaluator: Date:

Y = yes; S = somewhat; N = no

Center for Language Education and Research
Individual Text Evaluation - (Descriptive)
Reference Material - 1

Materials User:
Teacher
Student

REFERENCE MATERIAL EVALUATION

Are the materials up to date in

	Y	S	N
a. presentation			
b. grammatical approach			
c. state of knowledge about the language			

Are the materials suitable for use by

a. novice-level students			
b. intermediate-level students			
c. advanced-level students			
d. teachers/materials developers only			

Are materials arranged by

a. grammatical category			
b. semantic category			
c. functional category			

Is the presentation of the language

a. in its own script			
b. in romanization/transliteration			
c. in phonetic transcription			

Original intention of the materials:

a. teaching materials			
b. pedagogical reference			
c. linguistic study			

Do the materials purport to describe the entire language?

Are the materials

a. indexed			
b. cross-referenced			

Are the materials illustrated with

a. examples (sentences, phrases, words, etc.)			
b. texts (paragraphs, passages, etc.)			

Y = yes; S = somewhat; N = no

Center for Language Education and Research
Individual Text Evaluation - (Descriptive)
Reference Material - 2

	Y	S	N
Are examples/texts			
a. literary quotations			
b. quotations from oral sources			
c. contrived for purposes of discussion			
Are examples/texts which are translated into English			
a. literal translations			
b. idiomatic translations			

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Evaluator: Date:

Center for Language Education and Research
Individual Text Evaluation - (Descriptive)
Bilingual Dictionary - 1

BILINGUAL DICTIONARY EVALUATION

	Y	S	N
Is the dictionary up to date in			
a. vocabulary			
b. grammatical approach			
c. state of knowledge of the language			
d. use of accepted modern standard script, orthography			
Is the dictionary primarily aimed at the English speaker?			
Included in entries:			
a. etymologies			
b. definitions/explanations			
c. translation equivalents			
d. transliterations			
e. phonetic transcriptions of pronunciation			
f. grammatical information			
g. examples			
h. use of entry in phrases, idioms			
i. syllable division			
j. cross-references to other entries			
k. information on style levels			
l. information on regional, dialectal variation			
m. warnings about language learner errors			
n. cultural information			
Are examples			
a. literary quotations			
b. quotations from oral sources			
c. contrived for purposes of discussion			
Does the dictionary have an introduction or appendices presenting information of use to the language learner?			
Is such information simply and clearly stated, and highlighted in such a way as to attract the student's attention?			

Y = yes; S = somewhat; N = no

Center for Language Education and Research
Individual Text Evaluation - (Descriptive)
Bilingual Dictionary - 2

Does the dictionary approach full coverage of the vocabulary of the language? ☐☐☐

Can the dictionary be used by beginning students of the language? ☐☐☐

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Evaluator: Date:

Center for Language Education and Research
Individual Text Evaluation - (Descriptive)
Computer-Assisted Instructional Material

Materials User:
Teacher
Student

COMPUTER-ASSISTED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

	Y	S	N
Is needed hardware readily accessible?*			
Are instructions for starting, finishing and using the program clear?			
Can user move forward and backward in the program and exit easily at any time?			
Are response instructions clear?			
Does the program provide for reinforcement?			
Does the program provide for corrective feedback?			
Can the student control the speed of the program (in other than testing situations)?			
Are portions of the material usable in isolation of the rest of the program?			
Is student progress monitored and reported to the student?			
Is student progress monitored and reported to the teacher?			
Can the teacher add or delete items and explanations?			
Is the technical documentation clear to the non-specialist?			
Does the program utilize the capability of the medium to provide a variety of exercises which are potentially interesting to the student?			
Does the technology/presentation serve language-teaching goals?			
Can the program be adapted for both group and individual use?			
Is the program appropriately oriented to the target audience?			
Is the program compatible with classroom materials already in use?			

* Specific hardware required: _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

Evaluator: Date:

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Barbara Robson has directed several projects at CAL dealing with various aspects of language teaching and learning. She was the director of the project (Language/Area Reference Center--LARC) which developed the criteria for the evaluation of uncommonly taught languages, and on which the present criteria were based. She is currently directing a project to develop basic materials for an intensive course in Pashto.

Margaret McFerren took part in the development of the original criteria for the evaluation of uncommonly-taught languages, and coordinated the work of various outside evaluators in the completion of materials evaluations, including the collection of comments and suggestions for improvement of the criteria in general, and suggestions for amending the criteria for use in the evaluation of commonly- and less-commonly-taught languages. Ms. McFerren is currently a member of the staffs of the Refugee Service Center and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics at the Center for Applied Linguistics.